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Meeting Notes

Attendees: Jeff Brillhart, NHDOT
John Butler, NHDOT
Charlie Hood, NHDOT
Tony Grande, VHB
Bruce Tasker, VHB

Date/Time: June 28, 2001

Project No.: 50885

Place: Londonderry
New Hampshire

Re: I-93 Salem-Manchester ATF Meeting
Stonehenge Road through Exit 5 to I-93/I 293
split

Notes taken by: Bruce A. Tasker

Jeff Brillhart reviewed Project Status:

In January, the Department completed and distributed the Rationale Report, which essentially documents all work done over the previous eight months relative to looking at various alternatives. The recommendations in the Rationale Report suggest the following:

- Consider widening I-93 to be three lanes in each direction the entire length.
- Consider widening I-93 to be four lanes in each direction the entire length.
- Consider widening I-93 to be four lanes south of Exit 3 and three lanes north of Exit 3 in both directions.
- Construct Park and Ride lots at Exits 2, 3, and 5, and enhance the Exit 4 Park and Ride as appropriate.
- Expand existing bus service to Boston with stops at Exits 2, 3, and 5 as well as Exit 4.
- Enhance bus service by providing service between the NH Park and Ride lots and the Industrial areas in northern Massachusetts.
- Utilize Intelligent Transportation System Technology and improve upon the Department's incident management capabilities.
- Consider short term, localized improvements to address immediate safety concerns and capacity improvements where possible (Exit 2 NB on ramp; widen Pelham Road at Exit 2; create double-left off Exit 3 NB off-ramp; improve turning from NH 111 EB onto Exit 3 I-93 SB ramp; lengthen Exit 3 SB on-ramp; lengthen NH 102 EB left turn lanes going to I-93, Exit 4 NB on-ramp; lengthen I-93 SB off-ramp at Exit 5; improve Exit 5 signal timings.)

The Rationale Report also suggests that the Department not pursue the following:

- HOV lanes, as the ridership will not meet the threshold necessary to justify the lanes in the minds of those in the general-purpose lanes.
- Instituting rail service as part of this study. Ridership on any rail service would not diminish the need to widen the highway. However, the report notes that rail services will in all likelihood be required in the future if we are to maintain the level of mobility that is expected today. With that in mind, it is proposed that the highway widening be done in such a manner as to retain the room for the possibility of a rail line in the highway corridor sometime in the future.

In addition, the Department is trying to coordinate with the State of Massachusetts and with the NH Congressional Delegation in an effort to conduct a more global study of the transportation needs of the region served by I-93 extending from Boston to Manchester or even Concord. The study would look to concentrate on long-term needs and focus primarily on transit options. Having Massachusetts as a partner would allow for a more detailed discussion of the feasibility of the various rail alternatives.

Relative to other aspects of the project, the Department continues to hold monthly meetings with the environmental resource agencies. These Agencies appear to recognize the need to widen I-93 and correct deficiencies associated with the existing infrastructure. The agencies feel that serious studies need to be carried forward now relative to rail service and some feel that perhaps these studies should be done as part of the current highway study and to the same degree of detail, as opposed to concurrently with the highway widening studies.

The Agencies also feel strongly the improvements to I-93 will result in substantial secondary impacts to natural resources. That is, by improving I-93, NH becomes more accessible which entices more development for homes and businesses, which in turn impacts natural resources. To address to what degree and where these secondary impacts might occur, the Department, at EPA's urging, is proposing to utilize an Expert Panel to evaluate the issue. In essence a workbook will be prepared outlining current trends, and existing conditions relative to zoning, utilities, roadway infrastructure, etc. A panel of experts in the fields of land use, development and economic issues will review the workbook and answer questions relative to what the future might hold if the highway is widened or not. The panel will provide their evaluation individually and independently. Subsequently, the evaluations will be catalogued and returned back to the panelists so they can evaluate and consider each other's responses in terms of their own and then change or clarify their positions. Through this iterative process, hopefully some consensus or a range of possible scenarios can be provided to the Agencies and to the people of New Hampshire on the implications of widening I-93. The first meeting is June 29.

Jeff noted that the Department continues to meet with Massachusetts's officials to learn about their project to consider what might be done to improve the stretch of I-93 through Methuen and Andover where shoulders are allowed to carry traffic during peak travel periods. These officials are interested in a joint NH/MA study of the I-93 corridor and long term transit needs.

The Department, State Police, FHWA and local safety (police and fire) organizations are meeting regularly to consider what steps might be taken to improve incident management capabilities; that is addressing accidents along I-93 in a more timely manner to minimize delays to motorists. This initiative is still in the early stages, but the communication has been very helpful and it

appears that the efforts will result in very positive improvements for the motorists in terms of reducing delays along the highway due to accidents or incidents.

Jeff noted that relative to the plans being presented, the plans are still very much preliminary plans. The plans will be modified based on input the Department receives at the various meetings. There still needs to be quite a bit of design done before they are complete enough to fully address impacts. The plans are subject to change.

Plan Presentation:

Tony Grande then presented the plans developed to date for widening I-93, reconstructing the Exit 5 interchange in Londonderry, and addressing the I-93/I-293/NH 101 interchange in Manchester. Tony explained that the plans represent a more detailed design of the conceptual layouts presented in the Rationale Report. He explained the typical cross section shows a three-lane or four-lane widening of I-93 with approximately 60 to 90 feet inside the median area being reserved for a potential future rail line. There is also additional width along each of the inside (median) shoulders (6-ft) to accommodate possible future HOV lane construction and provide some flexibility in the design as the project moves forward.

This section of I-93 is approximately five miles in length and begins south of the Exit 5 interchange, at Stonehenge Road, and extends northerly through Exit 5 to the I-93/I-293/NH 101 split in Manchester. Preliminary plans are shown at a scale of 1"=200' and depict a 4-lane design scenario, which includes four 12-ft lanes with 12-ft shoulders in each direction, and a 3-lane design scenario, which includes three 12-ft lanes with 12-ft shoulders in each direction. The two concepts presented are generally similar with the basic difference being one 12-ft. lane in each direction.

In addition to minimizing impacts to existing property and environmental resources, certain controls were held for engineering purposes to accommodate construction and traffic control during construction. In some cases, bridges that were recently reconstructed were held as controls for widening to the inside or the outside of the existing structure. These controls will be identified along the corridor.

Stonehenge Road to Exit 5

Beginning at Stonehenge Road, the inside edges of the recently constructed bridges are being held as controls and the widening is towards the outside. The NB lanes will be widened to the east and the SB lanes will be widened to the west. This section will also accommodate enough width for the rail line in the median.

The NB barrel then transitions from widening to the outside to widening to the inside by holding the outside edge as a control and widening the NB barrel towards the median at the Exit 5 interchange. This was done to minimize impacts to wetlands and the pond adjacent to the highway, along the eastern side. The SB barrel continues to hold the inside edge as long as possible, until just south of the Exit 5 interchange, where the width for the rail line requires shifting the SB barrel to the west through the interchange area. The rail line ends just north of the interchange and ties back into the existing abandoned rail line to the west.

Exit 5 to I-293/NH 101 split

Proceeding north from the Exit 5 interchange, the NB barrel continues to hold the outside edge as a control and widen towards the median through the Londonderry/Manchester Town Line

where it begins to transition into the NHDOT's current Bodwell Road project construction improvements. The Bodwell Road project is identified on the plans in a different color (orange) than the proposed design to more clearly identify the limits of this current construction. The I-93 widening project would match into the current construction work by adding width to the outside (easterly) edge of the NB barrel. Four travel lanes would be widened out to five lanes south of the Bodwell Road bridge crossing and five lanes would be carried north to the I-293/NH 101 split. At this point, two lanes would split off to the west and match into the existing two lanes and three lanes would proceed to the north on I-93 and match into the existing three lanes.

Since the rail line is not proceeding north of Exit 5, the SB barrel transitions back to the existing SB barrel holding the inside edge as a control. The SB barrel is widened towards the outside (westerly) edge through the Londonderry/Manchester Town Line where it then transitions into the current Bodwell Road improvements. Similar to the NB barrel, this project would match the SB barrel into the current construction work by adding width to the outside (westerly) edge of the SB barrel. Two lanes from I-293 SB/NH 101 EB would merge with three lanes from I-93 SB, north of the Bodwell Road bridge crossing. From this point, five lanes would be carried south over the Bodwell Road bridge crossing and then transitions down to four travel lanes, and then to three lanes if the three lanes is approved.

Potential Noise Barriers

Noise barriers are being evaluated throughout the corridor. Through this section they are being evaluated along the east side of the roadway, between Stonehenge Road and Exit 5 and then again on the eastern side between the Londonderry/Manchester Town Line and the I-93/I-293/NH 101 split. Noise barriers are currently being constructed along the west side of the roadway as part of the Bodwell Road project.

Exit 5 Park and Ride

Two locations have been evaluated for potential park and ride locations at Exit 5. One location is adjacent to the I-93 SB barrel, south of Exit 5, with access from Perkins Road. A second location is adjacent to the SB off ramp in the northwest quadrant of the interchange with access proposed from NH 28.

Exit 5 Concepts (General Description)

Three different concepts have been developed for the Exit 5 interchange area. Concepts 1 and 2 represent the same general diamond-type configuration that exists today while Concept 3 proposes relocating the NB ramps. All three of the concepts reflect the same design from the SB ramps to the west.

The SB ramps would have the same general configuration as exists today however they would be lengthened and widened with additional turn lanes which would eliminate the backups onto the highway that occur today in the SB direction. A section of Perkins Road will be reconstructed to accommodate access to the Park and Ride with a short section of Perkins Road being realigned to improve the intersection with a widened NH 28 in this area. The major differences between the three concepts occur east of the SB ramps.

Exit 5 Concept 1 – NH 28 On-Line Reconstruction

This alternative is referred to as the On-Line option because this alternative holds the eastern edge of NH 28, southeast of the Exit 5 interchange, and widens NH 28 to the west towards I-93. A

new driveway is being proposed opposite the recently constructed Liberty Drive extension to provide access to the existing gas station. Properties fronting NH 28 through this stretch will have some impacts due to the proposed roadway widening such as driveway reconstruction and landscaping. The NH 28/Liberty Drive intersection would be signalized and widened to accommodate turning lanes. A raised median island is proposed along NH 28 in front of Auburn Road to force left turning traffic to use the signalized intersection at Liberty Drive and then travel along Independence Drive to get to Auburn Road. Access at the Auburn Road/NH 28 intersection would accommodate right turns into Auburn Road from NH 28 and right turns out of Auburn Road onto NH 28, only. The NB ramps would maintain the same general configuration that exists today however they would also be lengthened. This option would have three signalized intersections along NH 28 located at Liberty Drive, the SB ramps and the NB ramps. The need for a signal at Perkins Road or at the drive accessing the park and ride lot proposed in the NW quadrant of the interchange is still being evaluated. A six-lane section would be required for NH 28 directly under the I-93 overpass bridges, which would accommodate two through lanes and a left-turn lane in each direction.

Exit 5 Concept 2 – Relocated NH 28

This alternative is referred to as the Relocation option because a section of NH between the NB Ramps and Liberty Drive is relocated to the west. This option would require the acquisition of the Dunkin Donuts/Sunoco Gas Station. In addition, a section of the old NH 28, remaining from the relocation, would need to be dead-ended with access provided via Auburn Road. The NH 28/Liberty Drive intersection would be signalized and widened to accommodate turning lanes as proposed under Concept 1. Access at the Auburn Road/NH 28 intersection would also remain as in Concept 1. The main difference between Concept 1 and Concept 2 is the relocated section of NH 28 and the required property acquisition. All other design aspects are basically the same as Concept 1. This concept would also require three signalized intersections and possibly a fourth to accommodate Park and Ride lot access.

Exit 5 Concept 3 – Relocated NB Ramps

This alternative relocates the NB ramps approximately 1000 ft. further to the south opposite the Liberty Drive extension. This would eliminate one signal along NH 28 as proposed under Concepts 1 and 2 and also reduce the pavement width directly under the I-93 overpass bridges from a six-lane section down to a five-lane section. All other design aspects are basically the same as Concept 1 including the access with Auburn Road.

Jeff Brillhart presented tentative schedule of meetings:

- July 30, Salem
- August 16, Derry
- August 27, Londonderry
- August 28, Windham
- September 6, Manchester

Expert Panel Meetings:

- June 29
- Early August
- Early September

The Draft EIS should be completed by end of year. The Public Hearing is expected to be in February/March 2002 time frame. Construction will hopefully begin in 2004 as we continue to move forward on a very aggressive schedule.

Noise Barrier Presentation:

Charlie Hood made a presentation regarding noise barriers. Charlie stressed that plans are preliminary at this time and much of the information is very preliminary. The barrier locations are still very much subject to change based on further study.

The NHDOT follows procedures outlined in their Noise Policy and Federal Highway Administration's Noise Guidelines. The FHWA's traffic noise computer model is used to predict noise levels at exterior ground level locations to determine what areas are considered to be impacted by highway traffic noise. The computer program's accuracy predicting noise levels is verified by taking noise measurements in the field, counting cars, estimating their speeds, and then putting this information into the computer. The computer then predicts noise levels based on that information. The computer generated noise levels are compared to what is measured in the field and if they are close, the computer program is considered to be accurately predicting noise levels for those areas reliable for completing the analysis.

Year 2020 traffic volumes are being used for this project. Noise impacts occur when future build noise levels exceed FHWA's Noise Abatement Criteria, which for residential areas are where the exterior ground level noise levels are predicted to be 66 decibels or higher.

In order for a noise barrier to be included as part of the project, it must be constructable without significant impact on other resources such as historic properties, wetlands, endangered species, etc. Also, the barrier must be cost effective so that the cost per home receiving at least a 5 decibel reduction in noise is less than \$30,000.

Charlie noted that the following locations are still under review as to whether a barrier will be constructed or not. Preliminary analysis indicates the following:

Stonehenge Road

- The one home in this area appears to be just under the Noise Abatement Criteria level.
- Even if it did exceed the Abatement Criteria, it would not meet the Economic Criteria.
- At this time, it does not appear that a noise barrier at this location will be proposed.

Area along N.H. Route 28 East of I-93

- The majority of the homes in this area do meet the Noise Abatement Criteria.
- However, it appears that the major contributor to noise levels is the traffic on NH28, and that a barrier along I-93 would not significantly reduce the overall noise levels.
- The area will be reviewed further, but it appears that a noise barrier at this location will not be proposed.

Newton's Meadow Way off from Bodwell Road

- A number of the homes in this area exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria and it appears that the Economic Criteria can be met.
- At this time, it appears that a noise barrier at this location will be proposed.

Apartment Buildings along Bodwell Road

- Noise levels at the majority of these buildings do not exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria.
- It does not appear that a noise barrier will be proposed at this location.

Along Bodwell Road East of I-93

- There are a number of single family homes that exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria and a couple of apartment buildings that are very close to it.
- There are wetlands in the area that will complicate the construction of a noise barrier.
- Additional studies need to be done before a decision is made concerning a barrier at this location.

Other areas:

- Walton's Circle – No receptors exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria.
- New Development not built – No impacted receptors.
- Park and Ride Locations – Impacts will be identified and mitigation evaluated, pending further study on the viability of the two sites under consideration.
- Pahray Lane – No receptors exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria.
- Cohas Avenue – Outside actual construction limits for widening I-93; will determine if there are impacted receptors and review with the Department and FHWA to see if it can be studied as part of this project.

Questions and Answers:

Question: Is the criteria for implementing sound barriers published on the internet and if not, can we get a copy?

C. Hood: The Department's Noise Abatement Policy is available in print, we can send you a copy.

Comment: The noise barrier criteria can be obtained on the U.S.DOT website

Question: Has any air modeling been done in terms of the amount of increase in air pollution to be expected as a result of the increase in cars associated with widening the road? If not, when will it be done?

C. Hood: The air evaluation has not been completed at this time, but it will be completed and included in the EIS. The draft EIS is slated for completion by the end of this year.

- Question: Has there been any research done for natural sound barrier alternatives? The wooden and concrete barriers constructed by the Department are unattractive.
- C. Hood: The Department has evaluated a number of barrier alternatives since the first barriers were constructed back in the early 1990's. The evaluation looked at a number of barrier types and materials including metal, concrete and wood. The Department has tried evergreen walls, which are concrete trays filled with earth materials. This barrier was tried in Manchester and also in Nashua. Keeping the vegetation alive has been problematic. The barriers were retrofitted with an irrigation system that improved the quality and amount of vegetation. However, most of the people living adjacent to the barriers didn't care for them. The cost and maintenance for these barriers has been significantly higher than expected. The wood industry in New Hampshire has suggested the barriers be constructed using wood products. Based on a review of the different barrier types, the Department has been using concrete post and pressure treated wood barriers. At this particular point in time, the Department is undergoing a study to reevaluate concrete and other barriers that utilize recycled plastic materials. If this project were to be built tomorrow, the Department would construct concrete post and pressure treated wood barriers. But the Department is evaluating barriers that look good, are relatively inexpensive (such that the barrier more easily meets the economic criteria), and are relatively maintenance free.
- Comment: Germany is using more natural barriers such as trees and very heavy dense rows of hedges and they are very effective. NH barriers leave a lot to be desired when people come to NH.
- C. Hood: The Department will research such treatment. However, previous research has indicated that strictly vegetative barriers are difficult to maintain, and if the vegetation dies, difficult to replace. Developing a barrier dense enough and high enough takes time to grow. Also, as far as vegetation barriers are concerned, studies suggest that approximately 100 feet of dense vegetation is necessary to make a noticeable (5 decibels) difference in the reduction of noise levels.
- J. Brillhart: The preferable way to provide a natural barrier is to utilize some sort of earthen berm that can be landscaped. This treatment is used when the right-of-way is available to construct a berm. (In general a 10-ft high earth-berm barrier requires approximately 30 feet more land when compared to a 10-ft high sound wall). This treatment is also the Department's preference because it is less costly to construct than concrete or wooden barriers.
- Question: Is the time of day taken into account for the noise analysis?
- C. Hood: The worst noise hour of the day is what is considered. The peak traffic time and the off-peak traffic periods are checked to see which gives the worst hourly noise level.
- Question: For the folks along NH 28, what would be their best bet if they wanted to implement some type of noise treatment on their own property?
- C. Hood: The information compiled shows noise from NH 28 is predicted to be 66 decibels in the front yards of homes in the area. For most of these homes, the noise from I-93 is predicted to be 55 decibels. A wall that would effectively reduce noise from NH 28 would close off all access to the properties, which is not realistic. Addressing traffic noise for homes along NH 28 is difficult at best.

- Question: Would trees in the front help the noise level?
- C. Hood: The actual noise measured would not change, but psychologically, the situation might be improved.
- Question: Can you tell me where the locations are used for the study? I feel your numbers are wrong. You can't sit on our back porch and have a cup of coffee with the trucks going by and hear the person across the table.
- C. Hood: Are you in the home quite a bit further closer to I-93?
- Comment: My house is well off NH 28 and very close to I-93 NB. Is there going to be a sound barrier there?
- C. Hood: Your home definitely exceeds the Noise Abatement Criteria, but the other homes that are closer to NH 28 do not relative to I-93. Again, one home would not meet the Department's Economic Criteria.
- Comment: How much private property might be taken by eminent domain as part of the Park and Ride lot off Perkins Road? How many acres?
- J. Brillhart: That has not been determined at this time.
- Comment: Why is Option 2 (Perkins Road) the one that is always being emphasized? What is the story on Option 1 (transfer station site)?
- J. Brillhart: Option 1 is also a potential Park and Ride lot in the Exit 5 area. There is no preference from the Department's standpoint for one option or the other.
- Comment: What would be the criteria in deciding which lot would be constructed?
- J. Brillhart: Getting public input and resource impacts. For option 2 along Perkins Road the resources include a nice wooded setting located in a residential area. Other considerations include accessibility for motorists, the bus company, and for the train to reach it in the future if you build a train in the I-93 corridor. Those elements all weigh into the decision.
- Comment: Isn't it the responsibility of the Town Manager to notify the residents as to what is going on in the Town of Londonderry? We weren't notified. I learned about the meeting and the possibility of a park and ride through word of mouth. I received your letter requesting permission to go through my property to survey, but I never heard anything else after that.
- Comment: A petition was read (copy attached) opposing the Perkins Road Option.
- Comment: Is the Park and Ride married to the widening of I-93?
- J. Brillhart: No, it is not. However, NH cannot continue to build more and wider highways. NH needs to enhance its transit capabilities to reduce congestion. Options include bus travel, encouraging more people to car pool, and to eventually have train service here in NH. The idea for these Park and Ride lots is to facilitate all three of these options.

- Comment: Has the Advisory Committee from Londonderry actually looked into the other Park and Rides at Exits 3 and 4? Those lots seem to be vacant. I counted only 50 cars at Exit 4. Why do we need to construct a lot at Exit 5 when Exits 3 and 4 are not being used?
- J. Brillhart: The Park and Ride lot at Exit 3 hasn't been used because the bus companies won't provide service because the lot is too far from the highway. The Department has tried to enhance the lot and has tried to encourage bus service, but it is too far from the highway to be workable. The lot at Exit 4 does work and I am surprised you counted only 50 cars. I believe the lot has in the vicinity of 500 spaces and it is about 90% full on a regular basis. There are days where people cannot find a parking spot at Exit 4.
- Comment: There were 75 open spaces today; but it was very full.
- J. Brillhart: It is typically full and the bus company's feeling is that if we build these other Park and Ride lots with better accessibility to the highway, they will attract a large number of people as well.
- Comment: Do we really want to attract other people?
- J. Brillhart: We are trying to attract people that are in New Hampshire that would take advantage of the transit service as opposed to driving themselves, probably alone, to work. The Department is trying to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
- Comment: Basically you're saying the Park and Ride lot is necessary and there will be a lot at Exit 5 whether we like it or not.
- J. Brillhart: It is a recommendation. The Department would look to you folks and the public officials to tell us what they think.
- Comment: A letter was read opposing (Perkins Road) Option 2 (copy attached).
- Comment: I feel the primary need for the project is to widen the highway to minimize accidents and prevent deaths on the highway. Secondary impacts come with progress.
Regarding parking areas. If 90% of the people in Town sign a petition, I would hope that the State would take that as a serious negative.
- Comment: How many cars would the Department expect to park at either Option 1 or Option 2?
- T. Grande: The lots are being sized to accommodate 500 to 600 vehicles.
- Comment: Is there a plan to construct a traffic light at Perkins Road? Traffic today on NH 28 at Perkins Road backs up at least a mile to the west at 5:00 PM. Without a traffic light in that area, and the addition of 500 park and ride cars, the area will be gridlock. People would not be attracted to the Park and Ride Lot.

- B. Tasker: Backups that occur on NH 28 are a result of the signals and the lack of capacity at the Exit 5 interchange today. The Department is proposing to widen NH 28 in the interchange area so there will be two-lanes in each direction with provisions for left turn lanes. By adding the lanes the capacity will be improved, and the interchange ramps will be improved to operate at a good level of service (LOS). LOS is measured by evaluating the delay at an intersection, with LOS A being the best and LOS F being the worst. The Department has projected and evaluated the future traffic volumes and LOS in this area for a twenty-year period. The interchange intersections will operate at a LOS B and C in the future year. The LOS today is LOS F. With the reconstruction of Exit 5, the backups will not occur as you see them today. With respect to the Perkins Road intersection, if we don't have a Park and Ride along Perkins Road, our evaluation shows that a signal is not necessary. If we do have a Park and Ride at Perkins Road, most likely a signal will be needed (although this still needs to be evaluated).
- Comment: Why weren't four lane bridges put up a few years ago when new bridges were constructed at Stonehenge Road? Also, you seem to be shifting to the west, so what happens at the Windham weigh station. Every morning traffic reports indicate an accident at the weigh station. My understanding is that a portion of the weigh stations will need to be removed.
- J. Brillhart: Regarding the bridges, back in 1988 the Department initiated the I-93 widening project. The Department started with meetings in the Town of Salem. The idea was to widen that section of I-93 and then proceed to the north over a period of years and by the year 2001 or so this project would be all done. That didn't happen because the environmental agencies felt strongly that the highway needed to be looked at in its entirety and not in a piecemeal fashion. As a result the Department had to look at the entire section of the I-93 corridor, prepare an EIS, and develop a statewide traffic model, and the bridges that were intended to be replaced or rehabilitated as the highway was widened didn't get fixed in a timely manner as originally intended. When the Department contacted the Resource Agencies to discuss the very poor condition of the bridges and asked for approval to over-widen the bridges so that they would not have to be redone again in the future, the agencies felt that if the bridges were over-widened, the additional width would possibly dictate how the highway should be widened in the future. The agencies felt that without studying the whole corridor you can't make a decision as to which side a bridge should be over-widened. The Department and the agencies did not agree at first, so the early bridge improvements were fixed or replaced with 2-lanes only. As the Department addressed additional bridges that were in poor condition, additional discussions were held with the agencies. Over time they agreed that the bridges could be over-widened to maintain traffic during construction. As a result, some of the improved bridges were over-widened for traffic control purposes and they were over-widened in a way that can accommodate the widening of I-93 to the north and south of the bridge. At Bodwell Road the Department has developed the design so that the ultimate widening of I-93 whether it be 3 or 4 lanes can be accommodated, although additional bridge work will be required.
- Regarding the Windham Weigh Stations – In that area we think we are going to widen into the median. We are not going to remove either of the Weigh Stations.
- Comment: The Option 2 (Perkins Road) Park and Ride is on my property. Do you know the acreage needed?
- T. Grande: A rough estimate is 15 to 20 acres for the entire lot.

- Comment: Our closest estimation of our 18 acres would be 10.9 would be taken. Is the completion date for the Park and Ride, before, during, or concurrent with the highway project?
- J. Brillhart: We have to go to a public hearing first. Once approval is given, the Department would like to advance the construction of the Park and Ride lots and get the buses servicing them so that there are some additional options available during the construction of I-93 due to potential traffic delays.
- Comment: Will archaeologists be investigating our homes and properties for historical conditions?
- J. Brillhart: Those properties impacted by the highway widening will be investigated and evaluated in terms of historic resources. That process is ongoing.
- Comment: I would like to hear about Option 1, which is the transfer station. I want to know how the two compare because it seems to me there is a significant impact of the neighborhoods, landscaping and the wildlife in Option 2, but little if any thing would be destroyed with Option 1. Could you describe Option 1?
- T. Grande: Option 1 is a transfer station for trash. Option 2 is being considered in part because alternative rail layouts allowing for a full 50 mph design (the rail layout being shown requires trains to slow considerably to get from the I-93 rail corridor to the abandoned Manchester to Lawrence Rail Corridor west of Exit 5) would cross through the same wooded area proposed for the Park and Ride lot. Option 2 could serve either rail line layout.
- Comment: Has the 50 mph option for the rail line, with connection to the west, been dismissed?
- T. Grande: Rail options are not being studied further as part of the EIS, because rail service is no longer an alternative being considered as a means to address the needs of I-93. Another study needs to be done to consider the best options for rail. So, the 50 mph option is not eliminated, but it is not proposed either.
- Comment: Is that influencing the decision on Option 1 or 2 as far as the Park and Ride?
- J. Brillhart: Yes, it has some influence. To a degree it is a factor, but one of many. Relative to utilizing the wooded area off Perkins Road, from the Department's perspective there is some question as to whether the area will forever more be open, or will the area end up being developed. If it is to be developed, perhaps it could serve as a Park and Ride lot. We realize it has impacts just as the transfer station option has impacts. We are looking at options not knowing what the Town of Londonderry knows, and we come to you and ask what you think.
- Comment: In terms of development on the Option 2 property, numerous offers have been made over the last 24 years, and we have turned down all of these offers because we want the land to stay the way it is.
- Comment: Given that so many people are opposed to Option 2, are there other means to make this known to government officials?

- J. Brillhart: Your petition is helpful. You can also send letters to me or the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation.
- Comment: I have been in attendance at almost every meeting. This meeting has been the best attended. I wrote a letter to Commissioner Kenison and he has informed me when and where the meetings were to be held.
- Regarding Exit 3, you noted that the bus company said the Park and Ride was too far from the highway. Have you asked the bus company which option they like? From my point of view, it would seem the transfer station would be a better location.
- J. Brillhart: We have met with the bus company on several occasions to talk in general about bus station locations. We are also meeting with them on arranging for additional buses to serve these Park and Ride lots. They are very much in favor of having a Park and Ride lot at Exit 5 as they feel that Exit 5 has a big market.
- Comment: Why is there a need for a Park and Ride in the first place at Exit 5 and why is there a need to widen the road before we do a full rail analysis. If you are going to make major changes to this road and then you are going to make major changes again to this road for a rail, why isn't the rail option included in the EIS now?
- T. Grande: We have done a feasibility study relative to rail and we have done a ridership study relative to alternative modes of travel. The results indicate that rail service would not negate the need to widen the highway. If we were to build the rail, the ridership that would be attracted would not result in enough traffic being removed from the highway so as to eliminate the need to widen the highway or even reduce the amount of widening being considered.
- Comment: If there isn't enough rail ridership, why are we thinking about it in the first place?
- T. Grande: There is enough traffic on the highway in the Year 2020 to warrant five lanes south of Exit 1, four lanes up to Exit 3, and three lanes beyond Exit 3. By the year 2020, rail service may be required to address congestion which will again be reappearing, particularly south of Exit 1.
- Comment: How do you know that if you don't put rail in beforehand whether or not motorists will use the rail service and alleviate the need for widening the highway?
- T. Grande: The studies recently completed indicate that implementing rail service will not provide sufficient relief in terms of congestion and safety to influence the need to widen I-93.
- Comment: Many studies have shown since 1965, that if you widen a highway, you end up putting more cars on that highway. You don't necessarily get more people on buses, you get more cars on the highway, more air pollution, and more congestion. It is curious to me that you are even considering widening the highway. I drive that highway every day and I use Exit 5. If there was commuter rail, I would take the rail. I don't take the bus because the schedule is not convenient, the buses are not comfortable, and the buses often don't have heat in the middle of winter. There are a lot of reasons why people don't take the bus.

I would be interested in looking at the study. I think more people are willing to take rail than you realize. When you take the bus, you sit in traffic, just as cars do. If you take the rail, you do not sit in traffic.

- B. Tasker: The transit studies can be found on NHDOT's website. These studies estimate that in the year 2020 approximately 1,500 AM commuters would take the train into Boston if the train were connected to the Lawrence Station from the median of I-93. While a ridership of 1,500 commuters may seem like a high number, it actually is not when compared to the 140,000 vehicles projected (2020) to use the Salem section of I-93 daily. A ridership of 1,500 passengers does not reduce the need to widen I-93. Not all of the I-93 commuters could use the Lawrence Station connection rail service to get to their workplace. Based on the studies, it was determined that rail service should be a part of the overall long-term transportation solution and efforts should be made to preserve a rail corridor along I-93 for future use. That is what this layout is doing.
- Comment: We have trains coming from Boston to Portland, we have a train going from Boston to Nashua. Why are there not plans now to look at trains going from Boston up to Manchester? You are not reducing pollution, you are not reducing congestion, and you are not reducing highway infrastructure. The Federal Agencies that provide oversight for this project will say the same things that I am. They will say that you need to incorporate rail into this EIS study.
- J. Brillhart: What you are talking about is a philosophical debate and that debate needs to take place and is taking place. The people in NH need to come to terms with what they want because this is New Hampshire's transportation system whether it is rail, cars or buses. The input thus far has been--- we have a problem on I-93 and we need to address it, and we need to address it as quickly as possible. If rail isn't going to address the problems (which our study shows it won't), then we need to get on with the measures that will address it. The Department recognizes that widening the highway is not going to solve NH's transportation needs forevermore. There will be more cars coming and other modes will need to be implemented.
- Comment: It is important to consider the secondary impacts as part of the balance. We are talking about increased pollution in an area which is already in non-attainment. I am not clear as to whether or not you have seriously considered the issues.
- Comment: Regarding the transfer station: I was on the Planning Board a couple of years ago and at that time we adopted a Master Plan for the Town of Londonderry which made the No. 1 priority being the preservation of open space. Comparing the two Park and Ride options on that basis, the transfer station is the best option. The second point is that anyone who has to drive past the transfer station would not feel any loss or any remorse for having to replace it or getting rid of it, as it is a real eyesore. Regarding traffic impacts, when I was on the Planning Board, there was a proposed development of 232 apartments adjacent to the Perkins Road area. That has not happened yet. If that development were going in, then that would significantly impact traffic because those apartments would have a number of commuters in them. It would be nice to find out the status of that project and to take that impact into consideration.

- The last point is that Option 2 would increase the noise impacts to Perkins Road.
- J. Brillhart: The development, as I understand it, is taking place. I am not sure exactly what the status is.
- Comment: Being a user of the Park and Ride at Exit 4 and having had my car vandalized at least of couple of times, going with Option 2 on Perkins Road will put a lot of cars in jeopardy of being vandalized, as it is more removed from NH 28.
- Comment: There is a lot of vandalism on Exit 4, which is probably why a lot of people aren't parking there.
- Comment: Regarding Option 2: Is the Department still thinking of the east-west road coming into Exit 5. Is the Department trying to reserve the land to accommodate the east-west road from the airport?
- J. Brillhart: No, that is not a part of the thinking. As far as the Department is concerned, that project is not being pursued. Perhaps it will arise again in the future, but it is not in the current Ten Year Plan.
- Comment: Who on the Expert Panel to assess secondary impacts, is representing the environment? I heard you say there were representatives from banking and real estate.
- J. Brillhart: There are people on the panel that bring an environmental perspective. The EPA has been instrumental in having us utilize this process. The panel is well represented from a number of perspectives and hopefully it will give us some guidance as to what the secondary impacts are going to be. This is a relatively new evaluation process for this type of study and has only been used in a couple of other places. The process is currently underway in Maryland. The intent is to get a realistic, broad perspective on the whole issue.
- Comment: Will the Park and Ride lots be analyzed relative to noise impacts?
- C. Hood: The Department will be evaluating the Park and Ride areas as well as the I-93 widening alternatives. When the alternative locations are firmed up we will evaluate the impacts and potential mitigation for the feasible alternatives.
- Comment: Is there anyone on the Expert Panel from the Historical Resources in Concord?
- J. Brillhart: No there is not. Again, there is a cross-section of people who have an interest and knowledge of land use and transportation and the interaction between those two things.
- T. Grande: This project is part of a new environmental streamlining process and as a result the Resource Agency meetings are being held in Derry (all open to the public). At these meetings, all of the Resource Agencies are represented, get the same presentation, and are able to comment on the project. People from the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) participate in these meetings.
- L. Wilson: I am from the Division of Historical Resources. The Division of Historical Resources is a member of the Board of Directors for the I-93 streamlining process. The Division of Historical Resources has tried to attend as many of these Resource Agency and Task Force Meetings as possible. This is the most populous

area of NH, yet so few people from the communities have attended the meetings. I feel that people need to attend because of the many issues. I am concerned not only as someone involved with transportation and planning and preservation, but also as a resident of New Hampshire and as a resident of one of the small poor communities to the north and west of Concord that are all of a sudden going to get flooded with people who will find it a lot faster to commute to Boston when these improvements are made.

Also at issue is the concern that 20 years from now, NH will wind up in the same position with more pavement and the same congestion. The reason that the Division of Historical Resources has been quietly attending the meetings and taking notes is that the historical and cultural resources' work is now underway. The specifics are not yet available for comment, but because of our working relationship with NHDOT, the Division of Historical Resources will continue to have an opportunity to review the studies and comment on the potential impacts.

The Department highly values public opinion. The people who are presenting tonight are all New Hampshire residents and they have to live with the consequences of the decision. Unlike the people here who come to the meeting and hear this project presentation, the Department wrestles with this process everyday, not just for this project but for many other projects. The Department tries to see the larger picture and they need and want feedback from the citizens. The input they receive will give them the guidance so that 5 and 10 years later down the road we are not ganging up on them saying how could you have done this terrible thing to us.

- Comment: I understand that a traffic study for NH 28 at both Symmes Road and Perkins Road has not yet been completed. The traffic study might show a need for a traffic light for the proposed apartment development. This appears to be too short of a distance for having one light at Symmes and another one at Perkins. I think the traffic study will show they cannot put two traffic lights in such a short distance.
- Comment: Could I have five reasons why Option 1 is not as good as Option 2?
- J. Brillhart: The Department will look at what the possibilities are and we put them on the table. For option 2 the land was not substantially encumbered with homes. The land may not be vacant forever, and might be developed in the future. Conceivably the land is prime for development because it is right next to an interchange and there will be a lot of pressure on it. From our perspective Option 2 is an easier site to build on, an easier site to develop, and a less expensive site. The waste transfer station certainly has merits for the development of a Park and Ride lot, but the downside is the business will require acquisition and relocation. While NH needs waste transfer stations, not everyone wants to allow the siting of such a facility. Where are they going to relocate and how does the Town of Londonderry feel about that? When the Department met with the Londonderry officials and stakeholders at earlier meetings, the feedback was the waste transfer site looks like it is probably more preferable than the Perkins Road site. The Department is still looking for input.
- Comment: New York is the highest in parking fees, \$30.00 per day; Boston is \$28.00 per day and a lot of corporations are picking up the fee for those people that are employed in Boston. To me, they would welcome the train going into Boston

because for a lot of the people that don't have these corporations picking up their \$28.00 per day for parking, it is a big hole in their pocketbooks.

Comment: As one of the property owners of Option 2, why were we never notified by the State that they were going to do something to our property? How do we find out about the meetings?

J. Brillhart: The meetings are advertised in the papers and, advertised in Town offices. If anyone would like notifications for future meetings, please see me after the meeting. We have a mailing list and if you want to be on the mailing list, please contact me and we will put you on the mailing list.

Comment: Can you take the names off the sign up sheet and add those names to the mailing list?

J. Brillhart: This is still NH. We try to keep the meetings open, we publicize them and hold meetings often with the public and with the regulatory agencies. I would encourage you to come to the meetings. In the future, property owners that are directly impacted by this project will be contacted by mail of the meetings. We are compiling a list of all the abutters to the highway and the interchanges and they will get notices. The Department does not intend to send a notice out to everybody over 18 miles in five communities for this project. I think the word is out on the street and I think it is incumbent upon people to take an interest.

Comment: In the Rationale Report, near Exit 4, they had a conflict of trying to expand the existing Park and Ride. Is that why an additional Park and Ride is needed at Exit 5?

J. Brillhart: The expansion shown at Exit 4 is a concept that identifies a lot that would connect to the future train in the median. At Exit 4, we don't foresee needing to expand it very much as part of the bus transit Park and Ride system. If we build a rail station up through the median of I-93, we will need a station at Exit 4 nearby for serving the Towns of Derry and Londonderry, so that new piece of land is actually a part of the rail option should it come to be in the future. The Department does not propose to buy that piece of land at this point in time, as it would not be needed for bus service.

Comment: When widening the highway, is a barrier going to be put up to avoid tractor-trailers from driving into my backyard?

J. Brillhart: Where the slopes are steep or objects (such as ledge) are close to the highway, the Department installs guardrail. We try to do a reasonable job in terms of promoting highway safety, including adding guardrail where it is warranted.

Comment: Will guard rail or a sound barrier keep trucks out of my yard in all cases?

J. Brillhart: Not necessarily. Depending on the situation, there could be instances where a truck could penetrate a barrier or rail.

Comment: How do we find out if we are going to get bought out?

J. Brillhart: If it is not clear in the plans, you can contact me. I don't know if the widening would warrant purchasing your home, but you can request in writing, the

Department review acquiring your property, and the Department will give you its recommendation.

Comment: When do you expect the decisions to be made on these options and who would be making the actual decision.

J. Brillhart: We have been holding a number of meetings and will continue to hold meetings along the corridor right up to the Public Hearing next spring. The Department will then hold a formal public hearing, which is chaired by members of the Executive Council, appointed by the Governor. The Councilors will ultimately make the decision based on the input that is received as to whether the project should go forward. The Department will recommend whether I-93 should be widened to three lanes or four lanes. The Department will also recommend a Park and Ride alternative from the various options evaluated at each of the interchange areas under consideration. Councilors who attend the Public Hearing will get feedback and ultimately they need to make the decision as to whether the project should go forward or not. At the same time, the environmental agencies who need to issue permits will need to make their own decisions as to whether or not the project should go forward.

See Attached original text for petition letters